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# This Difference between Novels and Life

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## This Difference Between Novels and Life · *Debora Greger*

Somewhere a novelist described  
a character as looking like a piece  
of plot, standing in a doorway;  
and now I think it's the word "like"

that's important there—this man  
at the door with his books and bread  
is no invention, not heading next  
for some succeeding chapter,

one near the end where he's vehemently  
hugged by a woman who's tailed him  
for a good hundred pages. No.  
He sits on the sagging couch,

eyes closed, and removes his shoes.  
Rattling the dark, train whistles  
rouse a chorus of neighborhood dogs,  
then the house stills around us.

This morning I saw laundry,  
left out overnight, swaying, starched  
by frost. Raking up a musty blanket  
of walnut leaves, I uncovered

a brilliant grass I thought  
out of place. But it's not; this  
is California, December. What  
do I want for you, friend? Me

without history, attachments?  
A scene where, when you open the door,  
you're greeted by love's racket.  
Where is that house, that page?